DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 155 253 UD 018 242

TITLE	Facts and Figures about Chinese Americans.
INSTITUTION	Association of Chinese Teachers, San Francisco, Calif.
PUB DATE	[77]
NOTE	6p.; Best copy available
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Bias; *Census Figures; Chinese; *Chinese Americans; Economic Status; *Historical Reviews; *Immigrants; Migration Patterns; *Racial Discrimination; *Socioeconomic Status; Statistics

ABSTRACT

In this brief collection of facts and figures about Chinese Americans, information and data are presented on the geographic location of Chinese in America, the pattern of Chinese immigration to the United States, and income and occupations of Chinese Americans. In addition, a brief chronology of Chinese American history is presented. (Author/AM)

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Facts and Figures about Chinese Americans

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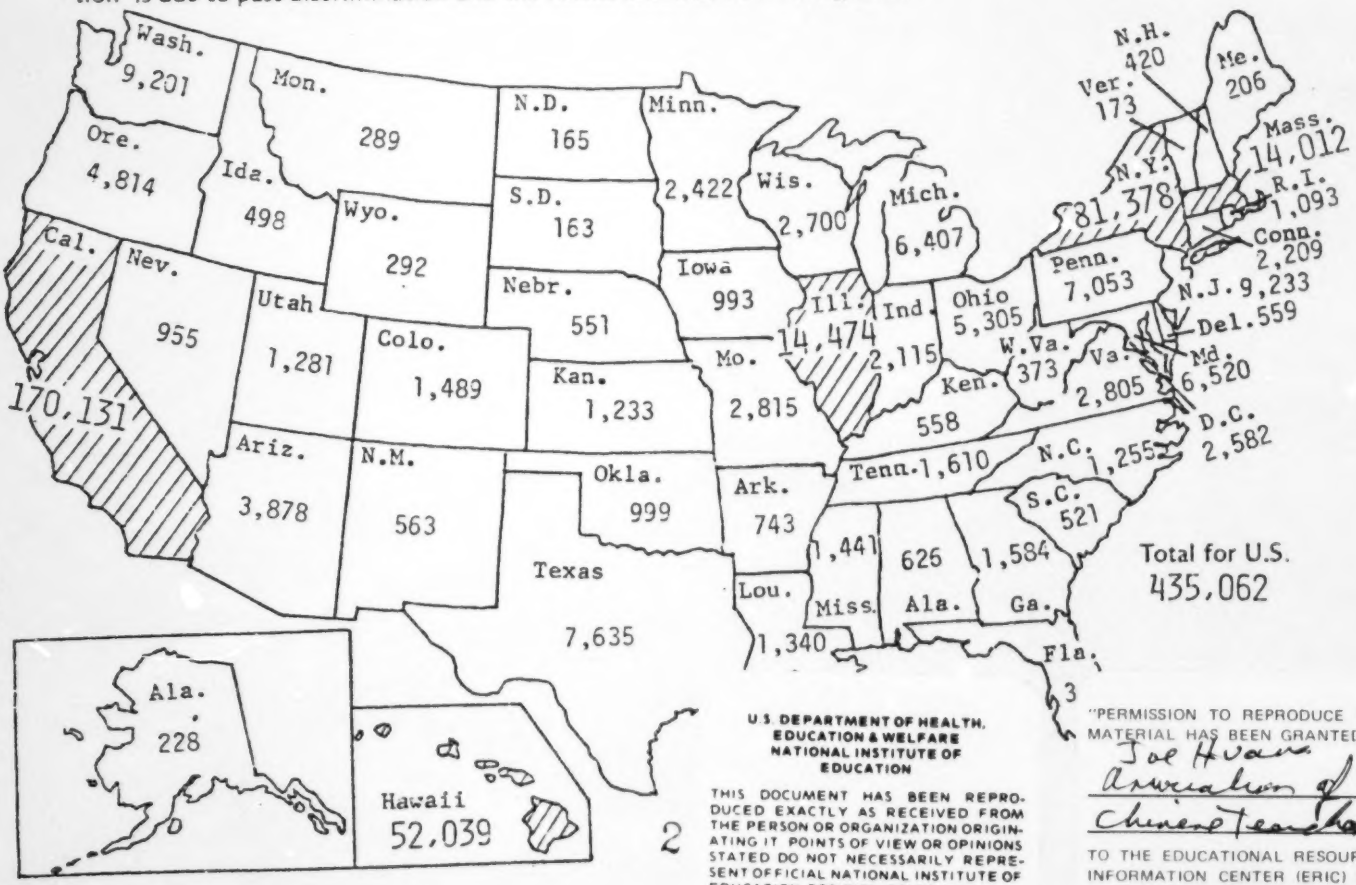
WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF THE CHINESE AMERICANS?

Chinese Americans are Americans of Chinese ancestry. Some Chinese American families are recent arrivals to this country, but many others have been here for several generations. According to the 1970 census, 47% of all Chinese Americans are foreign born, while the rest, 53%, are born in this country.

The large majority of Chinese Americans (90%) emigrated here from the southern province of *Guangdong*, and are known as Cantonese. There are other Chinese Americans from places such as Shanghai and Peking.

WHERE ARE THE CHINESE AMERICANS LOCATED?

Although the early Chinese immigrants in the 19th century lived and worked in scattered places throughout the West, the Chinese Americans today represent one of the most urbanized American ethnic groups and are highly concentrated in a few large cities. San Francisco, New York, Honolulu and Los Angeles alone hold more than half of the total Chinese American population (56% in 1970). This uneven distribution of population is due to past discrimination and the recent influx of new immigrants.



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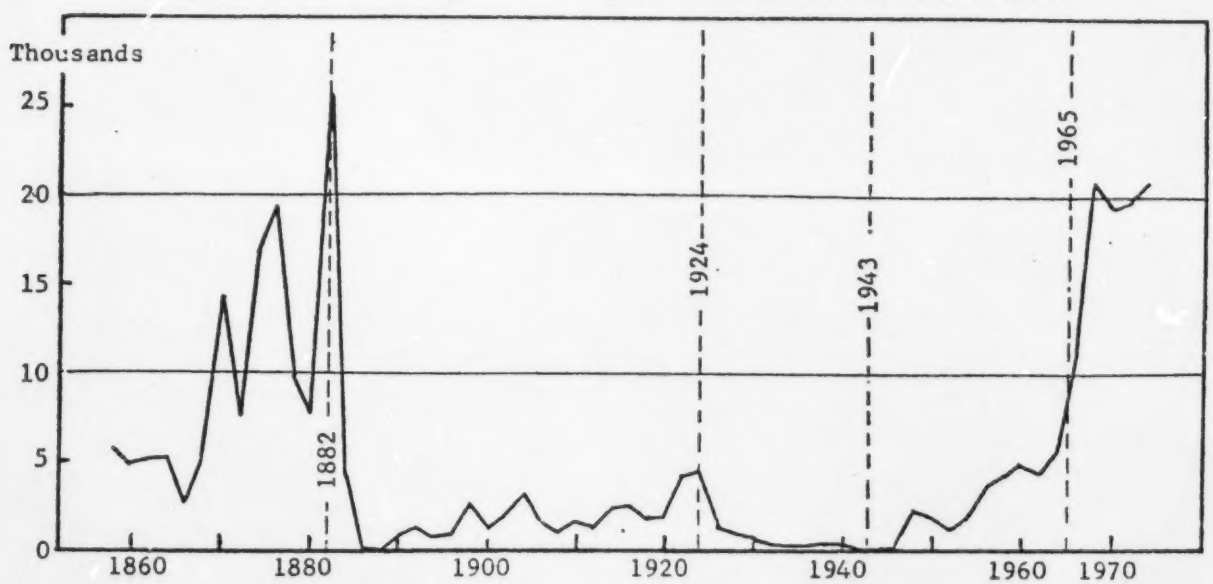
WHAT IS THE PATTERN OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES?

The Chinese are one of the earliest immigrant groups to come to the western United States, arriving in California in sizeable numbers since the 1850's. However, anti-Chinese immigration laws enforced between 1882 and 1965 have kept the number of Chinese immigrants to an artificially low number, so that today, the number of Americans of Chinese descent is only 0.2% of the total population, while even in California, where they once numbered 10%, the Chinese make up barely 1%. There are four major periods of immigration for the Chinese Americans :

1850's to 1882	Period of Free Immigration	Anti-Chinese agitation led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882.
1882 to 1924	Period of Restricted Immigration	Only merchants, scholars, and diplomats were allowed to enter the United States.
1924 to 1943	Period of Total Restriction	The Immigration Act of 1924 barred Chinese women from entering as wives of citizens and virtually stopped all Chinese immigration.
1943 to 1965	Period of Limited Immigration	During World War II, the Exclusion Act was finally repealed, and a token annual quota of 105 was allowed from persons "of Chinese extraction".
1965 to Today	Period of Liberalized Immigration	The new quota system of 1965 allows for up to 20,000 immigrants yearly from any country outside of the Western Hemisphere, including China.

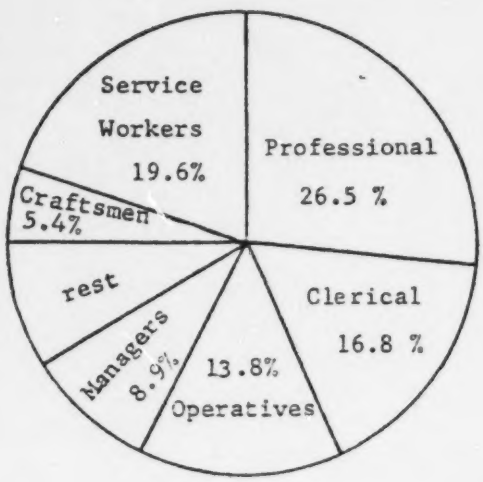
Number of Chinese immigrants entering the United States from 1857 to 1973.



averaged by 2-year periods. (for sources and figures, contact the TACT/ESAA Project)

Facts and Figures-

INCOME AND OCCUPATIONS



According to the 1970 census, there are 190,000 Chinese Americans on the labor market, including 49% of all adult women, a figure substantially higher than the national average.

In the past, Chinese workers faced extreme discrimination and could work only in undesirable or non-competitive occupations, such as laundries, restaurants, or as household servants. Today, Chinese Americans can be found clustered at the two extremes of the job market - highly educated professionals or menial workers. The professionals include a large number of professors, engineers and doctors; the operatives include a large number of women garment workers, and the service workers include cooks and waiters.

Although Chinese Americans have proven themselves in all types of work, many still confront discrimination and stereotyping in their working situations.

Some people have pointed to the incomes of Chinese American families as a sign of a "success story". While the 1970 census did shows that the median Chinese American family income was above the national average, it also showed that personal incomes were still low. This means that in many Chinese American homes, there are multiple wage earners, each of whom may be working at a low paying job.

Median Family Income (1970 census)

Chinese Americans	$10,610
U.S.	$ 9,590

Personal Income : Chinese males $6,877
Chinese females $3,512

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF CHINESE AMERICAN HISTORY

Events in China

9th to 16th Centuries - Trade with Japan and Southeast Asia

16th Century onwards - Increasing trade with European countries

1644 - Overthrow of the Ming, establishment of the Manchu Dynasty

1784 - First American Ship arrives in Canton, China.

1839 - Opium War with England

1846 onwards - Natural catastrophes, population pressures and civil unrest lead to large scale emigration.

1845 - 1873 The "Coolie Trade" sends thousands of Chinese overseas under slavelike conditions.

1850 - 1864 Taiping Rebellion and Red Turban Rebellion in south China results in millions killed.

1868 - Burlingame Treaty with the United States removes official restriction on persons wishing to go to the U.S., and guarantees equal treatment for Chinese and Americans in either country.

Events in the United States

1492 - Columbus lands in the West Indies

1607 - Jamestown established

1620 - Pilgrims land at Plymouth

1777 - United States War of Independence

1846-48 War with Mexico

1849 - California "Gold Rush"

1861 - 65 United States Civil War

1869 Completion of the transcontinental railroad spurs the population growth of California and the West.

1870's - Post Civil War Economic Depression

Events in Chinese American History

458 A.D. A passage in the History of the Liang Dynasty can be interpreted as recounting the visit of Hui-shen, a Buddhist, to the west coast of America. Descriptions are too vague to be accepted as positive proof.

1600's - Spanish records of Chinese settlements in Acapulco and later in Mexico City by 1635.

1785 - First record of Chinese in the United States. Three Chinese seamen land in Baltimore.

1815 - First record of Chinese in California, then still a province of Mexico.

1843 - Official U.S. immigration records show 43 Chinese immigrants prior to 1843 (does not include California).

1849 - Chinese population in San Francisco increases from 787 in 1849 to 4,018 by 1850.

Start of a Chinese American community. First theater established in 1852, first Chinese newspaper published 1854.

1850 - State statutes prohibiting testimony of Blacks and Indians in cases involving whites are also applied to Chinese.

First anti-Chinese riot happens in Tuolome County.

1852 - 20,025 Chinese in the United States. Start of large-scale Chinese immigration.

1852 to 1870's - Chinese in MINING. By 1870, the Chinese make up 28% of all miners in California.

1854 - Passage of Foreign Miner's Tax, enforced primarily against the Chinese. For 20 years, it provides one-half the income of California's government.

1855 - Yung Wing receives B.A. degree from Yale University, first Chinese graduate of an American University.

1860 - Chinese Six Companies formed in San Francisco, becomes the unofficial government of Chinatown.

Schools in California segregated by the state, repealed in 1947.

1860's to 1880's - Movement of Chinese laborers into AGRICULTURE, LAND RECLAMATION, FISHING, MANUFACTURING and SERVICE INDUSTRIES. Success in each of these fields is followed by anti-Chinese violence and restrictive legislation.

1863 - 1869 Chinese Workers on the TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

1867 - 5,000 Chinese railroad workers go on strike for higher wages. Strike fails due to lack of support from other workers.

1870's to 1900 - Period of ANTI-CHINESE VIOLENCE. Riots in Rock Springs (1885), Los Angeles (1871) and elsewhere.

Passage of anti-Chinese legislation in California, such as the Cubic Air Ordinance (1873), Queue Ordinance (1873) and Laundry Ordinance (1876).

1875 - A Chinese worker, Ah Bing, grows a special cherry later called the Bing Cherry.

1882 - CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT PASSED - suspends Chinese immigration to the United States, and formally prohibits naturalization of Chinese in the United States. Enforced through amendments until 1943. Stops large scale Chinese immigration for 60 years.

Events in China	Events in the United States	Events in Chinese American History
		1888 - Scott Act prohibits the re-entry of 20,000 Chinese workers who temporarily left the U.S. to China with re-entry permits.
1895 - Sino-Japanese War	1898 - Spanish-American War. Extension of U.S. influence in Asia.	1880's to 1900's - Chinese labor in agriculture replaced by other immigrants, notably Japanese, Mexican and Pilipino.
1900 - Boxer Rebellion	1903 - Wright Brothers fly first heavier-than-air machine.	Chinese American population confined to Chinatowns. Worked in laundries, restaurants or as domestics.
1906 - Chinese in Shanghai, Hong Kong and elsewhere stage a 1-year boycott of U.S. goods in protest of the treatment of Chinese in the United States.	1906 - San Francisco Earthquake (immigration records on Chinese in America lost . Many Chinese claim to be citizens. The "slot system" is born.)	1906 - Alien Land law passes. Aliens cannot own land. Repealed in 1947.
		1909 - Fung Joe Guey flies first heavier-than-air machine on West Coast.
1911 - Manchu government overthrown. Chinese Republic established.	1917 - 18 World War I	1910's to 1930's - Period of the "slot system" and "Paper Son" Immigration. All immigrants from China detained and questioned at Angel Island.
		1915 - Chinese American Citizen's Alliance formed to protect the civil rights of Chinese in the United States.
		1920 - Chinese American population declines from 132,000 to 62,000 due to immigration restrictions.
		1924 - Congress passes law preventing Chinese women to enter as wives of Chinese Americans, thus perpetuating the bachelor society.
	1929 - The Great Depression	1929 - Unemployment in Chinatown as high as 50%.
1937 - 1945 War with Japan. (Emigration to the U.S. broken off. Chinese Americans support the Chinese war effort.)	1941 - 45 World War II	1941 - 45 Chinese Americans join war industries and armed forces.
		1943 - The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed and Chinese in the United States given right to naturalize. Token quota of 105 set for Chinese immigration.
1945 - 49 Chinese Civil War		1945 - War Brides Act allows 6,000 Chinese women to enter the United States. as wives of men in the U.S. armed forces.
1949 - Establishment of the People's Republic of China	1949 - U.S. breaks off all diplomatic ties with mainland China. (Chinese overseas students are stranded and Chinese American ties to China are broken.)	
	1950 - 53 Korean Conflict	1953 - Refugee Relief Act allows entry of 2,777 Chinese as refugees of the Chinese Civil War.
		Revival of "Yellow Peril" in form of Chinese Communism.
		1957 - Yang Chen-ning and Lee Tsung-dao are awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics.
		1959 - Hiram Fong first Chinese American to be elected to the U.S. Senate (Hawaii).
	1960's - The Civil Rights Movement (stimulates the struggle for the civil rights of Asian Americans)	1962 - 15,000 Chinese immigrants are allowed to enter the U.S. under the Refugee Relief Act.
		1965 - IMMIGRATION REVISION LAW permits increase in Chinese immigration from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia and Latin America. Chinese American population nearly doubles between 1960 and 1970.
		1968 - 1969 Third World Strikes at San Francisco State College, U.C. Berkeley, and other campuses. The rise of the Asian American Movement, demands for ethnic studies, and increased interest in the People's Republic of China.
1971 - The invitation of U.S. Ping-pong team to China signals a change in U.S. - China relations. (Chinese Americans are able to visit China for the first time in 22 years.)	1972 - President Nixon visits the People's Republic of China	1969 - 70 - Inception and growth of Asian American community organizations to meet the needs and problems of Chinatown and other Asian communities.
		1974 - Lau vs. Nichols sets landmark in bilingual education, mandates that non-English speaking students must receive special education.
		1976 - Samuel Ting is awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics.